

Message Text

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41

ACTION AF-04

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 SSO-00 PM-03 INR-05 CIAE-00 IO-03

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FM AMEMBASSY CAPE TOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 4133

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA NIACT IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM PRIORITY

AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

USUN NEW YORK 890

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAPE TOWN 0706

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, US, SF

SUBJECT: US VISIT OF SOUTH AFRICA'S ADMIRAL BIERMAN

REF: CAPE TOWN 704 NOTAL CAPE TOWN 705

LUSAKA ALSO FOR ASST SECTY EASUM

1. SUNDAY TIMES ARTICLE IN CAPE TOWN 705, OBVIOUSLY PUBLISHED
WITH APPROVAL SAG DEFENSE MINISTER, STRENGTHENS ME IN CONVICTION
THAT VISIT BY ADMIRAL JOHNSON WILL BE GREATLY PREJUDICIAL
TO U.S. NATIONAL INTERESTS.

2. IT IS ABSOLUTELY CLEAR THAT ADMIRAL JOHNSON IS NOT VISITING
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THE U.S. FOR PLEASURE. WHEN I SAW THEM FRIDAY (CAPE TOWN 704),

ADMIRALS BIERMAN AND JOHNSON MADE NO ATTEMPT TO HIDE SAG INTENT TO EXPLOIT "PRIVATE" VISIT TO ENABLE JOHNSON SEE US OFFICIALS, ESPECIALLY MILITARY. WHAT NOW WORRIES ME IS WHETHER ELEMENTS IN SAG THINK THEY ARE PUTTING ONE OVER ON US OR WHETHER THEY MAY ACTUALLY THINK WE ARE GOING ALONG WITH THEIR INTENTIONS, MORE LIKELY THE LATTER. WE CERTAINLY HAVE HAD NO ASSURANCES THAT JOHNSON WILL NEITHER SEEK NOR ACCEPT ANY EXECUTIVE BRANCH CONTACTS.

3. EVEN IF VISIT WERE ESSENTIALLY "PRIVATE," THERE IS NO WAY IT CAN BE DISSOCIATED WITH JOHNSON'S STATUS AS HEAD OF S.A. NAVY. AT TIME WHEN WE ARE TRYING TO PUT BEST LIGHT ON OUR VETO OF UN EXPULSION RESOLUTION, PUBLICITY THAT IS BOUND ACCOMPANY AND FOLLOW JOHNSON VISIT WILL COMPOUND SUSPICION OF USG MOTIVES. COMING ON HEELS OF ADMIRAL BIERMAN'S VISIT LAST MAY AND SEEN IN LIGHT OF PRESS DISCLOSURES AND DISTORTED ANALYSES OF LEAKED NSSM 39 DRAFT, JOHNSON'S VISIT WILL BE REGARDED AS ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE OF MILITARY COOPERATION BETWEEN U.S. AND SOUTH AFRICA.

4. THERE IS NOTHING WE CAN GAIN FROM TRIP BUT MUCH TO LOSE, AND WHILE THEY MAY NOT RECOGNIZE IT, SAME IS TRUE FOR SOUTH AFRICANS. WHATEVER QUESTIONABLE ADVANTAGE THEY GAIN, IN BROADER PERSPECTIVE OF RELATIONS WITH BLACK AFRICAN STATES, THEY DAMAGE THEIR OWN CAUSE. AT TIME WHEN PRIME MINISTER VORSTER APPEARS TO BE ATTEMPTING TO CONVINCE AFRICAN LEADERS THAT SAG IS WILLING MAKE CERTAIN CONCESSIONS IN ORDER TO IMPROVE RELATIONS AND PREVENT ESCALATION OF DANGEROUS TENSIONS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA, EFFORTS BY SAG TO BUILD OR CREATE IMPRESSION, HOWEVER INCORRECT, OF CLOSE MILITARY TIES BETWEEN SAG AND U.S. CAN ONLY ADD TO AFRICAN SCEPTICISM OF BOTH U.S. AND SOUTH AFRICA'S TRUE INTENTIONS. IF THESE EFFORTS HAVE EFFECT OF SERIOUSLY INTERFERING WITH PROGRESS TOWARD NEGOTIATION IN INTERESTS OF PEACEFUL CHANGE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA, ALL WILL BE LONG-TERM LOSERS.

5. IN VIEW OF FOREGOING, I BELIEVE WE SHOULD DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO PREVENT THE JOHNSON VISIT. ALTHOUGH WE HAVE INFORMED BIERMAN AND JOHNSON THAT WE CAN ISSUE A B-2 VISA FOR PLEASURE VISIT CAN TELL THEM THAT THIS IS NOT NOW POSSIBLE AS IT HAS BECOME OBVIOUS THAT VISIT IS NOT INTENDED PURELY FOR PLEASURE AND THAT IN VIEW OK PRESS COVERAGE IT HAS TAKEN ON OFFICIAL CONFIDENTIAL

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COLORATION THA CANNOT BE ALLOWED TO STAND. IF IT IS NOT POSSIBLE FOR US TO INDICATE OUR INTENTION TO DENY VISA (WHICH SEEMS LEGALLY JUSTIFIABLE IF NECESSARY UNDER SECTION 212(A) (27) OF IMMIGRATION & NATIONALITY ACT), THEN I WOULD RECOMMEND WE TRY TO DISCOURAGE VISIT BY OFFICIALLY INFORMING SAG THAT WHILE WE DO NOT WISH FORMALLY TO REFUSE VISA FOR TRIP STIMULATED BY U.S. CONGRESSMAN WE WISH THEM TO KNOW THAT VISIT WOULD BE AGAINST WISHES OF USG EXECUTIVE AND CONTRARY TO INTERESTS OF

BOTH COUNTRIES. IN EITHER CASE I BELIEVE WE SHOULD TAKE EARLIEST OPPORTUNITY (PERHAPS DURING EASUM VISIT) TO APPRAISE SAG AT HIGHEST LEVEL OF REASONING IN PARA 4 ABOVE.

6. I REALIZE THERE MAY BE OTHER FACTORS THAT ENTERED INTO EARLY DECISION FAVORING VISA OF WHICH WE NOT AWARE. HOWEVER, AS SITUATION IS DEVELOPING, I GENUINELY FEAR THAT VISIT BY ADMIRAL JOHNSON AT THIS TIME MAY (1) SERIOUSLY DAMAGE THE CREDITABILITY OF POSITION USG TOOK IN VETOING UN EXPULSION AND (2) JEOPARDIZE FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN SAG AND CERTAIN AFRICAN STATES, WHICH AT THIS TIME APPARENTLY BOTH SIDES DESIRE.
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